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ABSTRACT

Twelve films of successful Negroes were shown on a weekly basis to fifty-six black high school males. Sixty-two black males from the same school served as controls. Pretesting was done one month following the last film. Tests involved the measurement of reactions to anonymous whites and foreigners. Experimentals became more negative in their evaluation of white photos following the films and they tended to be more rejecting of attitudes reflecting white superiority sentiments. This was especially true of lower socio-economic students who were felt to be more in need of inspirational models. The results were felt to suggest that an increase in pride about race results in an accompanying more negative or critical attitude toward whites. (Authors)

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Some effects of films of successful Negroes on racial self-concept.[1]

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This research stemmed from the observation that the absence of good models within the immediate environment of lower socio-economic Negro youth influences his whole range of values and self-concept. (Grambs, 1965; Lott and Lott, 1963). Previous research by the senior investigator (Teahan and Hug, 1969), dealing with the impact of films of Negro professionals, who had themselves come from impoverished backgrounds, revealed that black lower socio-economic students could receive inspiration from these "success stories." Of particular interest was one finding which emerged from the study, namely, that an improvement in the self-concept or in the racial pride of Negroes will result, at least initially, in what was interpreted by the investigators to be greater hostility toward whites. This was felt to be a result of an externalization of hostility formerly internalized and turned toward the self.

Procedure

Film Description

Twelve men (6 Negro and 6 white males) were the subjects of twelve films which ranged in length from 15 to 25 minutes. These same films were used in a previous study by the investigator. Negroes had been chosen from those occupational areas where they had either been previously excluded because of prejudice, or where they had been active but unpublicized. Whites were included in order to obscure the purpose behind the films. The following professions were represented in the films: Negroes - architect, pharmacologist, political scientist, retailing executive, sculptor and computer systems engineer. Whites -

accountant, clinical psychologist, chemist, Federal judge, newspaper reporter, and T.V. executive.

Subjects

Black students from an all male Catholic high school in grades 9 through 11 participated in the study. Two study period groups of mixed grades composed of 56 students were designated as the experimentals and they saw films on a weekly basis. Two other study groups of 62 students with similar grade distribution served as their controls. Socio-economic level was determined by rating fathers' occupations on the Warner-Meeker & Eels scale. A score of one through five was designated as higher socio-economic level. Scores of six or seven (unskilled or minimally skilled labor) were designated as lower socio-economic.

Instruments

1. Photograph Technique: This test, a modified version of one used by Secord (1959) in studying prejudice among whites, was used by the senior author in a previous study of Negro attitudes. It measured the differential reaction of students to full face photographs of anonymous black and white males. A booklet with five photographs (three white and two black) was presented to the subject in a W, W, B, W, B order. The subject was asked to evaluate each photograph separately in terms of the kind of personality he felt characterized the pictured person. He was asked to avoid thinking about the reasons for his ratings and was urged to give his "gut reaction" to each photo as he viewed it. Students rated each photo using a five-point scale in each of 16 traits with a high score reflecting a more negative view of the pictured person.

2. Social Survey Questions: This questionnaire was primarily composed of items taken from the Levinson F scale. Buried among these items were seven statements dealing with attitudes reflecting white racial superiority and seven

statements taken from the California E scale dealing with negative attitudes toward foreigners. (See Table I). The former items were worded so as to not be too racially inflammatory and yet to give some opportunity to black subjects to express their feelings on a six-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" regarding racial superiority-inferiority attitudes.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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Pre- and Post-Test Instructions and Film Introduction

One important feature which the investigator tried to control was that the students used as experimental subjects did not connect the testing with the film experience. Thus, pre-testing was done one month prior to the first film and post-testing was done one month following the last film presentation. This meant that a 20-week period intervened between pre- and post-testing.

Pre-testing was done by black students who introduced the experiment as one involving the ability to tell about people simply on the basis of how they look. Students were told that some psychologists feel that we react unconsciously to tiny cues in the faces of people which give us information about them. They were also told that other tests would be administered which were felt to measure things related to this ability.

The films were shown on a weekly basis during study periods in the following order: judge, systems engineer, reporter, architect, clinical psychologist, T.V. executive, sculptor, political scientist, chemist, pharmacologist, accountant and retailing executive. They were introduced by the teachers who showed them as career movies which might aid in vocational choices.

Results

Analysis of variance with repeated measures was done with black and white

photos treated separately, since the previous study (Teahan and Hug, 1969) showed changes occurred on post-testing among experimentals only in their treatment of white photographs. In the analysis of results, there are also two subject conditions--film versus no film experience--and two levels of subjects within each condition--higher socio-economic and lower socio-economic status.

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Insert Table 2 about here
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Table 2 reveals a significant film effect by socio-economic class interaction ($F=5.24$, $p < .05$) for white photographs only. An examination of this interaction failed to reveal any significant differences between socio-economic class film and no film groups. The means presented in Table 3 indicate that a trend existed for lower socio-economic class males to become more negative toward white photographs following film viewing, while their lower socio-economic class controls became more positive under the same circumstances.

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Insert Table 3 about here
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Table 4 shows the repeated measures analysis of variance for total scores on white superiority and foreigner items. There were no significant differences found for either white or foreigner items. There was, however, a strong tendency for experimentals to become more rejecting of white superiority items following the films, although the obtained F of 3.26 did not meet the level required for statistical significance. There was also a tendency for lower socio-economic students to contribute most heavily to this difference, but, again, this result is merely suggestive.

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Insert Table 4 about here
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Correlations were computed to determine the degree of relationship between reaction to white photographs and to white superiority items. A correlation of -.23 was found between total pre-test scores on white photos and total pre-test scores on white superiority items. This is significant at the .05 level and indicates that a high score on photos (more negative evaluation) was related to a low score on white superiority items (greater rejection of these attitudes). A correlation between change scores on these two instruments failed to reach the level required for statistical significance ($r=-.13$), even though the negative relationship remained. However, when one considers the unreliability of change scores and their limited variance, these results are still highly suggestive, especially since the predicted direction of the relationship was maintained.

Discussion

The results lend support to the hypothesis that films of successful Negro professionals can have some impact on Negro youth, especially those most in need of inspirational models, namely, lower socio-economic students. As with a previous investigation by Teahan and Hug (1969), the major change following films was in terms of treatment of white, rather than Negro, photographs with students who saw the films rating these photos more negatively following this experience. This finding had been interpreted in the past as indicating a more negative evaluation of whites on the part of the experimentals and it was hypothesized that perhaps the first step in the development of a more positive self-concept among Negroes might entail an increase in hostility toward whites. This was further discussed in terms of the Negro's identification with the aggressor and was compared to Bettelheim's (1943) study of Jews in concentration camps who began to imitate their Nazi guards. Bettelheim felt that when a person perceives himself to be in a completely helpless situation, where his destiny lies entirely in the hands of some powerful figure, through the process of identification with the aggressor, a sense of pseudo-strength and security can be gained. Indications

of this phenomenon in the past among Negroes were felt to be tendencies to bleach the skin, straighten the hair, and to develop a social hierarchy with light-skinned blacks at the top. Studies by the Clarks (1947, 1950) and others have supported these observations. However, it might be anticipated that as feelings of power and strength increase, and as helplessness and dependency decrease, this rage would then be redirected outward to the previous primary source of frustration.

There is today evidence of a change in this phenomenon of racial inferiority feelings even among young Negro children and a recent study by Hraba and Grant (1970) found that Negro children no longer misidentify themselves (as white) and they now tend to choose black dolls over white. Along with this, it is now interesting to note the pronounced trend among black adolescents and adults to renounce white ways, to wear hair "naturally-styled," and especially to disdain "honkies" (whites) and "oreos" (blacks who are white on the inside and who have, therefore, failed to make a black identification). The ramifications of this increasing positive racial image on attitudes toward whites are, however, still unclear.

One finds in the research literature much contradictory evidence regarding the subject of anti-white attitudes among Negroes. Marx (1967), for example, found a negative relationship between a more positive self-image among blacks and hostile white sentiments, which would seem to contradict the idea that the first step in a more positive self-image is externalized hostility toward whites. However, Marx may have been dealing with persons who had well-established positive self-images, rather than ones in transition. In this respect, there are some hints in the literature that the relationship between positive self-image and anti-white attitudes may be curvilinear. Thus, there was a strong tendency for rioters in both Detroit and Newark to have some high school, rather than some grade school,

education. However, being a high school graduate, or having some years of college, contributed to counter-riot attitudes (Caplan and Paige, 1968). Rioters also reported significantly more anti-white attitudes than non-rioters, although they also expressed hostility toward wealthy Negroes as well. However, the report did conclude that "along with increased racial pride, there appears to be intense hostility toward whites (page 133).

Caplan (1970), who found militants with higher self-concept than non-militants, also concluded that "militancy does not appear to be associated with increased hostility toward whites " (page 67). He cites the findings of Murphy and Watson (1970) and Caplan and Paige (1968) as indicating that the main grievances among blacks are with economic and social restrictions, but that whites, as a whole, are not held responsible for this. It is, therefore, surprising to find Paige (1970) himself, in a later article, reporting that a positive relationship exists between militancy and anti-white sentiments. Perhaps the problem is a semantic one in terms of deciding just how prevalent and strong an attitude must become before it is labeled as "hostile." In addition, as mentioned previously, the relationship between self-concept and hostility toward whites may be non-linear, or perhaps phasic, so that one passes through a period of more anti-white sentiments as self-esteem, or a sense of accomplishment, reaches certain limits.

The finding that black experimentals, particularly lower socio-economic subjects, did show a trend in becoming more rejecting of white superiority items when compared to their controls also supports the hypothesis that an increase in black pride is related to increased hostility toward whites. The significant initial relationship between a negative evaluation of white photos and a rejection of white superiority statements further supports this. It is also interesting to note that in spite of this, there was no increase in hostility toward an obvious target group in the present study, namely, foreigners. There is, however,

some data in a recent unpublished study by the senior investigator (Teahan, 1971), which may cast some further light on this finding. In a study of black and white police officers at the beginning of their police training, he found that both groups had equal California F scale scores and E scale scores toward foreigners. However, at the end of academy training, all black officers had dropped significantly on both of these measures, while white officers remained the same. In addition, it was found that initially high scores on these measures by black officers were significantly related to positive feelings toward whites and negative feelings toward blacks and that as these black officers dropped on the California scale measures, they became more hostile toward whites and more positive toward blacks. This was interpreted as meaning that black officers had initiallyidentified with the perceived attitudes and prejudices of the white authority structure, but, as they became more disillusioned and angry, this identification was rejected with a resulting drop in authoritarianism and prejudice toward other outgroups.

Examination of the means for both white superiority items and white photos also reveals that many of the obtained differences were due to lower socio-economic controls who, over the six-month period between pre- and post-testing, became either more positive in their evaluation of white photos or more accepting of attitudes suggesting that whites were superior to blacks. What the films essentially seemed to accomplish was to prevent lower socio-economic blacks who saw them from moving in this same direction. This drift also did not occur among higher socio-economic controls, who, instead, resembled more their experimental counterparts after a similar period of time had elapsed. Perhaps then what we are perceiving in the present results is not just the development of a more critical attitude toward whites on the part of experimentals, but the development of even greater helplessness and an acceptance of black inferiority on the part of lower socio-economic controls.

Summary and Conclusions

Films of successful Negro professionals seemed to have an impact particularly on lower socio-economic black high school males. There was felt to be evidence that an increase in pride about race results in an accompanying more negative or critical attitude toward whites. It was suggested that these anti-white sentiments are temporary and may be the first step in the development of a more positive self-concept among blacks.

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Footnotes

1. This report is based on part of a larger research project dealing with the effects of audio-visual techniques on the self-concepts of Negroes. It was supported by a grant from the U.S. Office of Education, No. OEG-0-8-0080040-3712 (010). The investigators are extremely grateful to the Chicago Catholic Board of Education and to Miss Julia Bell, coordinator of research.

Table I

White and Foreigner Items from the Social Survey Questions Instrument

White (W) Items:

3. The idea that the white race is naturally better is a fairy tale that some people believe in order to make themselves feel more important.
14. It would not be surprising if in the next 50 years the colored people of the world made even greater contributions to society than the whites.
22. It is only natural and right for each person to think that his race is better than any other.
26. The people who raise all the talk about putting non-whites on the same level as whites, and giving them the same privileges, are mostly trouble makers trying to stir things up.
28. There is no question in my mind that the white nations of the world will lead the way and that all other nations will remain followers.
34. There will always be superior and inferior nations in the world and, in the interest of all concerned, it is best that the superior ones be in control of world affairs.
35. History clearly shows us that the white race cannot be equalled in good government and great achievements.

Foreigner (F) Items:

4. The worst danger to our country during the last 50 years has come from foreign ideas and agitators.
8. Many Latin American countries will probably never become as civilized and as good as the United States.

Table 1, concluded

Foreigner (F) Items, concluded:

15. There is something different and strange about many minority groups (such as Chinese, Mexican and Jews); it is hard to tell what they are thinking and planning and what makes them tick.
16. Any group or social movement which contains many foreigners should be watched with suspicion, and, whenever possible, be investigated by the F.B.I.
19. World War II proved that we must be very careful never to trust foreign countries.
30. World War II proved that America should always be on its guard and keep foreigners out of the country.
33. The most vicious, irresponsible and racketeering organizations are, in most cases, those having largely foreigners for leaders.

Table II

ANOVA Repeated Measures for Black and White Photographs

		Black Photographs		White Photographs	
Source	df	MS	F ratios	MS	F Ratios
A - Film Effect	1	73.69	1.66	15.57	.51
B - Socio-Economic	1	14.44	.32	.11	.00
A X B	1	27.95	.63	1.13	.04
S	106	44.25		30.65	
C - Pre - Post	1	37.47	2.48	32.33	3.22
A X C	1	11.20	.74	.40	.04
B X C	1	22.94	1.52	2.39	.25
A X B X C	1	4.61	.31	50.96	5.24*
S X C	106	15.07		9.73	

* Significant at the .05 level

Table III

Means on Black and White Photographs and White Superiority and Foreigner Items for High and Low Socio-Economic Experimentals and Controls

	Experimentals		Controls	
	High	Low	High	Low
Black Photos	N=36	N=18	N=33	N=23
Pre-test	45.10	43.92	45.73	46.63
Post-test	43.74	44.50	44.03	45.67
White Photos				
Pre-test	48.43	47.54	47.74	49.16
Post-test	48.35	49.04	49.85	48.83
White Items				
Pre-test	18.49	18.42	18.78	16.78
Post-test	16.76	17.95	17.97	21.71
Foreigner Items				
Pre-test	21.50	25.06	23.30	23.35
Post-test	21.06	24.44	23.33	23.39

Table IV

ANOVA Repeated Measures for White Superiority and Foreigner Items

		White Items		Foreigner Items	
Source	df	MS	F ratios	MS	F ratios
A - Film Effect	1	.01	.00	5.54	.08
B - Socio-Economic	1	33.52	.74	158.05	2.26
A X B	1	3.04	.07	148.96	2.13
S	106	45.56		70.00	
C - Pre-Post	1	13.06	.67	3.08	.14
A X C	1	63.58	3.26	4.06	.19
B X C	1	30.11	1.55	.08	.00
A X B X C	1	34.62	1.78	.10	.00
S X C	106	19.48		21.74	